Given to me by Will. Rogers of the Inner Temple 26. May 1675.

XI

# AN EXPEDIENT OR

## A sure & easy way of *Reducing* all *Dissenters* whatsoever to an exact & sincere *Obedience* both to our *Ecclesiastical* & *Civil Government*.

AMong all the great nations that have been, no man I beleive can show me the example of *England*, which being not only still intire under the Rule of its lawful Governour, but also a great deal stronger in it selfe, by the happy conjunction of *Scotland* (its former dangerous enemy) should nevertheless since the *Reformation* bee *de facto* much weaker, & consequently lesse considerable to our *Neighbours*.

All *Englishmen*, of what persuasion or intrest soever, unanimously conclude that our differences in *Religion* are the cause; & therefore as some of every *Opinion* have proposed their *Expedients* for the cure of this misfortune, so I hope I may take the same liberty, & throw in my mite also, being induc'd thereunto by the affection I bear my Countrey, which I suppose moved the rest, that have already written: and though I am borne a *Member* of the *Church of England*, whose *Liturgy* & *Rites* are so worthy of admiration, yet I shall do what I can (as far as 'tis lawful) to bridle in my *Zeale*, least seeming too partial, I should rather harden than mollifie our *dissenting Brethren*; who happen (which is the misery of it) to be too numerous & considerable in this poor distracted *Nation*.

We all know that the whole kingdome as to *Divine Worship* is divided (besides its subdivisions) into these four great Parties, *viz*: *Church of England men*, *Presbyterians*, *Independents*, & *Papists*; the three last of which we call *Nonconformists*, as contrary to the present Religion establish'd.

Our *Church of England* is farr more numerous than any, and has persons in it of all ranks and conditions; but it seem's not so full of *Zeale* as the others, because it abound's with men that are too much in love with humane Interest, or have no Religion at all; for these ever flock to that *Church* which is in power, whether true or false.

*Presbyterians* have generally on their side the *Corporations*, & all formal men, which they are pleas'd to call the *sober part of the Nation*;

but as they are rich, ſo they lye more open to be haraſs'd, whenſoever the black day of tribulation happen's.

The *Independents* or *Phanatiques* conſiſt only in *Artizans*, & the meaneſt of the Land, & yet are in two things very conſiderable; as firſt, let the *Government* do what it will with them, they cannot be much poorer, ſo that in three months they will recover, & be as they were; In the next place, Their *crafts* & *trades* are of great concernment to us.

Of *Papiſts* there are ſeven parts of ten, Gentlemen, & people of great quality, & therefore they fancy that their Religion is probaly the trueſt, becauſe it has been profeſs'd here all along by ſo many men of parts & faſhion; and boaſt that it is only through Ignorance, or want of attention that the whole Nation is not as blinde as themſelves. As for *Perſecution* they are not much terrified at it, having (as they beleive) manfully endur'd it ſo many years; beſides by long practice they know not only all the wayes imaginable to evade the penalties of the *Lawes*, but alſo by their birth have Relations in all offices, & employments, that alwaies did, & ſtill do helpe them when they are in danger to be whipt by us.

This then in three words being the *intereſt* and *ſtate* of each party, wee may the eaſier finde out a *Remedy* for our *diſorders*, which have ruin'd, or at beſt ſtrangely ſhatter'd one of the moſt flouriſhing *Kingdomes* in the world.

Ever ſince the *happy Reſtauration of his Majeſty*, there hath been ſtill a great cry in all quarters for *Liberty of conſcience*, to which I have been greatly inclin'd, not only out of compaſſion to well meaning deluded ſouls, but out of conviction alſo that it would totally root out all *Sects*, & erronious *Opinions* from among us: & ſeeing we have found by experience that *ſeverity* has neither deſtroy'd *Popery*, which is ſo ridiculous to every body but its Profeſſors: nor yet prevented a troubleſome brood of our own, I ſay conſidering this, we ought to try what *mildneſſe* will effect, ſince all wiſe men alter thoſe projects which they finde deficient: at leaſt we may make tryal of it for a while, as our matchleſſe *Parliaments* do, that enact often lawes to continue but for ſo long, to be the better able to ſee whether they may reape the propoſed advantage by them; Nor can this tryal be any wayes prejudicial to us, if it endanger neither the ſouls of men, nor cauſe a diſturbance in the *Civil Government*.

*'Tis impoſſible*, (according to the profeſſion of all our moſt learned *Proteſtants*) *to hazard our Salvation by Opinions whilſt we agree in that main Fundamental*, to wit, *The ſatisfaction of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; for other-

otherwiſe we muſt ſhipwrack our ſelves, whether we will or no, on the unavoidable rocks of *Popery*; becauſe if there ſhould yet be any thing more, which we are neceſſarily to beleive, an *infallible Interpreter*, and *Magiſterial Iudge* to guide the ignorant & unlearned would conſequently follow; *Magiſterial* I ſay, becauſe a poor ſimple man muſt implicitely believe, as not being ever able to comprehend or underſtand ſome truths; & *infallible*, leaſt men might be ſtill doubting whether yet they are in the right or no.

No marvel then that *Mr. Chillingworth* (the miracle of his age) ſticks cloſe to this, thinking it very ſtrange a man ſhould be damn'd for notions which he cannot comprehend; & therefore layes down *Repentance from dead works, and a beliefe in the comming & merits of Chriſt*, as the only *Fundamentall* amongſt *Chriſtians*, & as a thing adequate to every ordinary capacity. The *Papiſts* who would fain come near our truths, are alſo nibbling here though they handle it another way; for they will have it too, *That all men are damn'd through their own wilfulneſſe in reſiſting evident things*, & ſay *Though Chriſt as a Prophet ſent from God may be eaſily conceived by humane Reaſon, yet an infallible Church to govern his flock is eaſier comprehended and eaſier demonſtrated to a Chriſtian, than his being ſent can be proved to an Infidel.* & ſo forſooth this *infallible Church* by its *definitions*, & *explications* makes the hardeſt *myſteries* as eaſie as the plaineſt

I here ſet down this pretty *Doctrine* dreſſ'd after the *Roman faſhion*, to ſhow, that if a *Proteſtant* ſhould not ground damnation on our wilfulneſſe in rejecting things within the reach of our capacity, the very *Papiſts* themſelves will riſe up in judgment againſt him at the laſt day, to his utter confuſion & ſhame.

This *moderation* the eminent *Doctor Taylor* himſelfe highly eſteem'd, & this he ſo ſtoutly maintain'd in his book of *Liberty of Prophecying*, that to this day it remaines unanſwer'd. Many enemies I know he created to himſelfe by his reconciling *zeale*, & though by their cry he paſſes at preſent for a better *practicall* than *controverſial Divine*, yet he has (as all men acknowledge) made it evidently appear inconſiſtent with *Proteſtant charity* to damne any of our poor *Diſſenters* for their *errors*.

For firſt, can any godly *Proteſtant* thinke a *Preſbyterian* a limme of Satan for refuſing to conforme to *habits* and *ceremonies*, which every body confeſſes were neither commanded by Chriſt, nor his Apoſtles: or ſhall he be reprobated for railing againſt ſtage playes though the drift of the beſt of them is to abuſe the *Brethren*? Nor can the diſowning of *Epiſcopacy* be damnable, unleſſe we ſubmit our ſelves to *Tradition & Eccleſiaſticall authority* for the *Scripture* has many ſeeming arguments for

that opinion. *Predeſtination*, & the manner of *Chriſts* deſcent into Hell are points diſputable among all *Chriſtians*, and *God* forbid we ſhould thinke that every error in judgment will deprive us of all happineſſe hereafter.

The *Iudependents* or *Phanatiques*, owe their being to the foregoing *Sects*, & if they wildly fancy a barne as good as a Church, or a Graduate, not ſo learned as a Cobler, with other odde extravagancies (the halfe of which no one man can recount) let us not be more rigorous than the *Pope*, who only lookt upon them that came to *Rome* to convert him as mad; & I think neither *S. Peter*, nor his pretended Succeſſors have lockt Bedlams out of heaven.

Nor ſhall I damne *Papiſts* for matters of Faith, whilſt they believe the *Trinity*, & can patch up their other *Doctrines*, ſo as not really to intend thereby the dishonour of our great *Lord* & *Maſter*. For (as I ſaid before) *God* forbid every errour in judgment ſhould be a ſin to death.

They fancy many promiſes in *Scripture*, *That the Church ſhall never erre*, *That it is to be viſible in proſperity & adverſity as a Iudge in all diſputes that occurr*, & laugh at *Proteſtants* for affirming that the *Scriptures* are eaſie, ſeeing all *Sects* among us quote Scripture for what they hold, & yet the one is quite oppoſite to the tenets of the other in things of the higheſt nature.

They preach up *merits* (they ſay) to encourage men to worke; but tell us expreſsly (when we urge them with the foulneſſe of the *tenet*) *That neither their own actions, nor the actions of any Saints can be in themſelves ſufficient to bring them to heaven, did not God promiſe to accept them as meritorious, and ſufficient by the ſuperabundant merits of Chriſt.*

*They honour Saints* (they ſay) *only becauſe they were faithfull ſervants of Chriſt*; & believe, *That theſe holy Spirits, muſt needs know our wants by their rejoycing in heaven at our converſion*, & *That their prayers for us are much more powerful with God*, than *tho'e of our friends here below*, which we all often implore: yet they oblige none to pray to *Saints* except they will.

*They think by our Saviours ſaying that ſome ſins* (*viz.* thoſe againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*) *ſhall not be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come, that it infers, that other ſins may be forgiven in this world, and in the world to come.* And therefore *pray for the dead* (*that have built upon hay & ſtubble & other imperfect things*) whom *S. Paul* to the *Corinthians* declares (they ſay) ſhall be ſaved *ſo as by fire*. And they more firmly alſo believe this *Purgatory* becauſe, the *Maccabees* (*that fought for the maintenance of Gods Law*) *pray'd for their ſlain Brethren*; *which* they often

often urge is recorded by an unquestionable *Historian*, if not by a *Divine Writer*.

As to their *Idolatry* in the *Sacrament*, they say, *That by believing Christ really there, 'tis him they worship, & not a piece of bread. That the thing is no lesse possible according to humane reason than the Trinity: That the words*, THIS IS MY BODY are as plain, as THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR RECORD IN HEAVEN; & *That* it is much for their advantage, that all sects of *Christians* in the world grant the *Real presence*, except a few *Calvinists* as they call them.

By that text of *Scripture*, *Confess your sins one to another*. They think their *Confession* enjoyn'd; & that *Christs* commission to his Disciples *to binde & loose* authorizes their Priests *Absolutions* and *Interdictions*. And before many of their Books of *Pilgrimages*, *Reliques*, *Pictures*, & the like (to show their worship is relative) they print this piece of *Saint Jerom's* Epistle against *Vigilantius* "*We honour the Reliques of Martyrs*, "*to render adoration to him for the love of whom they were Martyrs, wee* "*honour the servants, that what we do for their service may be refer'd to their* "*Master, who sayes, He that receives you receives me.*

I should never have done, were I to set down all their *opinions*, & *Jesuiticall* glosses, but this I must say for them, that they have much lesse to answer, since they really think themselves in the right, & are so united in their *Fundamentalls*, whilst the poor *Protestants* (to the great shame & weakening of the *common cause*) quarrel irreconcileably about nicetyes, & then divide & subdivide without end.

Far be it therefore from us to damne these *Papists* though *ignorant*, especially seeing, we must do the like then to the *Lutherans*, who are not only *Protestants* but the first *Reformers* also: for their Churches are cram'd with *Crucifixes*, & *Pictures*; and which is more, they as really believe *Christ* in the *Sacrament*, as the *Pope* himself; the *maine point* in which he & his brood commit *Idolatry*, as the *Church of England* & the other *reform'd Churches* hold.

Let not therefore our passion shut up heaven against any to whom our *Saviour* has open'd it; & since *Protestants* themselves do so disagree (as sometimes each man in a family is of a different Church) let us be the more charitable in our censures, according to the healing advice of many a painfull *Divine*; and thus may the *Papists* be baffled with their own distinction, *viz. That they differ in school poynts only, & not in Fundamentalls*.

But here I desire not to be misunderstood, for I hold many other Doctrines extremely advantageous to poor souls, & heartily wish all men of my opinion, but nothing but time & new methods can unite us without the utter ruine of the *Nation*.

Having thus like a good *Proteſtant* prov'd, That *Indulgence* to *diſſenters* though (they ſhould encreaſe by it, as ſome vainly fancy) cannot hinder their *ſalvation*, becauſe all that do well may be ſaved; I will now come to the *civil Government*, & ſhow you that it will be ſo far from cauſing *diſturbances*, or endangering the *true Religion*, that in ten years there ſhall not be a *diſſenter* left to piſs againſt the wall; & this I hope (if practicable) muſt ſatisfy even thoſe, that limite *God's mercy*, eſpecially ſince they know how firmly ſects are already rooted here, & could never be extirpated by the ſeverity of our *Lawes*.

I have often laugh'd to heare perſons of each *Sect* among us pretend that their Religion teaches nothing but *obedience* to Magiſtrates, whilſt all others foment *Rebellion*. Now for my part I would abſolutely truſt no Religion in the world with the full power of depoſing Princes, no more then I would have an *Infidel* truſt his wife in bed with me becauſe I am a *Chriſtian*. 'Tis moſt certain that the true religion of *Chriſt*, comands as well an exact *obedience* to our *Rulers*, as that we ſhould not *commit adultery*; but yet whilſt men are men, many of the Profeſſors of this truth (what by the force of a partial appetite, & ſelfe *intereſted* diſtinctions) when they have opportunity, often tranſgreſſe thoſe two precepts, though as poſitively commanded as can be: & therefore ſome doubt whether all the *Primitive Chriſtians* would have been ſo patient under *Nero*, *Domitian*, *Diocletian*, *&c.* had they had power enough to contend: Nor will I more paſſe my word that the *Grand Seignior* ſhould continue *Emperour* & *Mahometan*, were the ſword wholly in the hands of his *Chriſtian* ſubjects, than that all the members of the *Church of England* would have ſubmitted to our preſent *Monarch*, had he yielded to the *Papiſts*, who were as buiſy (they ſay) as Bees to convert him.

All men whatſoever affect to have their Prince of their Religion, becauſe they fancy it moſt for the glory of *God*, but nothing heightens this *zeale* ſo much as *perſecution*; for whenſoever there is difficulty of obtaining our will, the deſire of enjoyment encreaſes; as we ſee even in women that often riſque life, fortune, honour, & all to enjoy a *Gallant*, when as if they afterwards marry (& then there will be no need of comming in by the window) 'tis a thouſand to one but they preſent y loath each others converſation & bed. Beſides this natural proneneſſe to purſue what is hinder'd us (for *paſſions* often beare ſway even in our ſpiritual actions) ſelfe preſervation alſo or the hopes to be quiet puts the braines of *diſſenters* upon propagating their Religion; nor is it a ſmall argument to many of the truth of a new *Doctrine* to ſee men ſuffer for it.

This we have experimentally ſeen here at home in every party that

now contends with the *Church*; for what could be more irresistible than *Presbytery* in the beginning of the late war, & how many men, women, & children, would have willingly ventur'd their lives for the *Cause* whilst kept under? & yet within three yeares or thereabouts after it's establishment 'twas kickt downe even by those who had before set it up with such *zeale* & *hazard*.

*Phanaticisme* (as all mankinde inlightned with the least spark of reason will acknowledge) has no greater enemy than it selfe, nor ever did, nor ever can stand, because it wants all *principles* of *settlement*, & therefore 'tis we that blow the party into some appearance of *unity*, in hoping by disturbance to hasten their ruine.

As for *Papary*, let us consider it in *Queen Elizabeths* time, & we shall find in our *Protestant Historians* that for the first ten yeares of her reigne no man as a *Papist* suffer'd either in his life, or Estate, & yet from a handfull the *Reform'd* became much more than halfe the *Kingdome*; but after that the Government began to enact *sanguinary* & penal Lawes we find that *Allen*, *Philopater*, & the rest of their active Writers insisted upon no argument more (to prove the truth of their Religion) than that *Protestants* of all sorts became dayly *Papists*, but not one in 7. years left them, except some scandalous fellow which was a greater advantage than losse to them.

Let us look in the next place on their *Jesuiticall Seminaries* at *Doway*, & *Saint Omers*, & you shall find them (as knowing men have assur'd me) much emptier now they can carry *popish* Children over with little danger, than in the former dayes, when it was done by great bribes, & they often indited for fugitives also.

Again if we reflect upon our *late Rebellion*, it was called by many (as I well remember) the *Popes harvest*, & *Halcyon dayes*; & yet we know they lost besides others of note, two *Marquesses* at a clap (I meane the heires apparent of *Winchester*, & *Worcester*) the like of which cannot be paralleld in the greatest severities of the *Queen*, nor in the violent storme that universally fell after the *Powder Treason*.

Lastly, Concerning *Proclamations* & the like, what man ever found the least good by them? If there be any thing got, the Priests are the gainers: for (every body say's) not one stir's out of *England*, & 'tis likely also by being in a seeming kind of danger, that they are the more caress'd by their *Penitents*. Nay if all things were well examin'd, we shall finde that the *Protestants* themselves doe ever pitty them in distresse, & that there are never more *conversions* than in the height of these pudders, which 'tis no

wonder

wonder if they enter into their *Annalls* as *Perſecutions*.

If *punishment* then ſerves only to encreaſe the number of *Sectaries*, why ſhould we be ſo much their friends, & do them courteſies to be rayld at for our paines? *Courteſies* I ſay, becauſe their *Domine* or *Godly Paſtor* would otherwiſe ſtarve, whereas now there's nothing thought too good for him; & the flock then would have alſo leiſure to conſider their extravigance, vvhich novv the *pleaſure* of being *haraſs'd* hinders. No *Cavaliers* vvill vvonder at my joyning the vvord *pleaſure* to *haraſſing*, ſince I dare ſay there are not any of thoſe great & loyal ſubjects, though they novv poſſeſſe places ſuitable to their merits, but had formerly more ſatisfaction in one poor play by ſtealth at *Hayns's*, in one meeting at *Doctor Gunning's* in danger, or in contriving any halfe Moon-plot over a pint of ſack, than ever they enjoyed (as to their own particular) ſince the abſolute eſtabliſhment of his *Majeſty*.

This is the nature of fraile man, & if the beſt & wiſeſt of men cool a little by enjoyment, what muſt they do that have no other guide but *paſſion*.

I wish then that our *Sectaries* had *churches* allowed them, & all the *priviledges of their birth right* as they call it; nor am I yet their Advocate, but the Nation's, as hoping to preſerve it's Inhabitants & deſtroy their foolish blind *Zeale*, which hath been ſo fatal to us.

Their *Churches* or *Congregations* I would have under penalty publique & regiſter'd, which has nothing of particularity in it, ſeeing all the *Churches* in the Kingdome are ſo. By this meanes his *Majeſtie* would know their *perſons*, *manners*, & *Doctrine*, which now by their meeting in holes, he is wholly unacquainted with; & if any man then ſpake in the leaſt againſt the Government, he ſhould be made an example with all the ſeverity that could be thought of.

I have heard ſay that in *Holland* (where no Religion is unwelcome) if any Miniſter in his ſermon, or other ſpiritual function, meddles with *State affaires*, the Magiſtrates ſend him next day a pair of ſhoos to carry him forthwith out of the Prouince; & preſently he provides for his march, otherwiſe he is ſure to be hang'd unlamented; nor do they ever touch more than the *offender*, which proceed's not ſo much from *Juſtice* or *Compaſsion* as *Prudence*; it being certain no penalty can ſo ſurely tye up an Incendiary's tongue as (when he ſuffers) not to be pitied by his Party.

For to punish the whole *Body* (as the English cuſtome is) for the faults

faults of some *members*, makes them all desperate, racking many times their brain to defend an action (the then *common cause*) which otherwise they would have disown'd without difficulty; & besides it is a kind of real martyrdom when a man actually suffers either in his life or estate, for a crime which perchance strictly & truly he abominates.

No wonder then, that our *Papists* not only reckon themselves *Martyrs*, but are cry'd up & esteemed for such by so many forreign Princes; which must needs draw a scandal upon the Nation, & so do the *Protestant Religion* a prejudice both at home, & abroad, if these encrease, and gain repute also by their sufferings. I cannot therefore but be highly dissatisfyed with our *common Justice*: which entailes Rebellion on a *Sect*, & insulting too much over the weaknesse of mankind, necessarily (as it were) inclines from father to son unprincipled men to all villany & Treason.

Let us therefore call to mind the *Scotch Presbyterian Rebellion* in 66 last, & see what a ruine it would have been to *England*, had his *Majesty* instead of his own great prudence, & mercifull temper followed their councel, who thought it fit to pursue our *Presbyterians* at home, as complotters with those actually in arms. This would have driven all into the utmost despair, especially those that loved the *King* & *Kingdom* best; for then they would have deem'd it impossible to satisfye, & consequently thought ill designs the best of their play; nor would they have look't upon themselves or children otherwise than slaves, since no slavery is equall to that, of being always suspected by the Government. Many that are now faithfull, would then have been not only incens'd, but perchance have turned their *Bibles* over & over to find again arguments to maintain *Rebellion*, for what will not men fancy *God* says, when 'tis absolutely necessary for their ends?

Were every man that now heartily rejoyces at a Thief's execution at *Tyburne*, to suffer with the Malefactour, we should not only see *theft* defended by its present condemners, but reckon'd for a *virtue* also. Some would cry up the life of a man for an ineftimable jewel, & to be preferred before all worldly trash. Others would term *propriety*, a *tyrannique*, & *unjust usurpation*, with the like metaphysicall fancies; nay the tricks of a Rascall would be then called the effect of a dexterous wit, & the setting upon two or three unarmed Grasiers, the height of all valour & courage.

There's nothing can ever destroy us in *England* but disagreement, nor shall the Government ever fail of being thought the common enemy by all *Nonconformists*, whilst the folly or knavery of some few is imputed to the whole gang in generall.

If this way of proceeding were lay'd aside (which now strongly cements them) their *Congregations* would quickly be as well satisfied with

the condemnation of a guilty *Member*, as we ordinarily are at what paſſes at the *Old Bayly*, or at any of our other *Seſſions* It may be ſome might ſtrive to mince the matter of fact (as dayly friends do in all faults committed) but none would then defend a crime to be no crime, which is the thing I ſolely inſiſt upon, for from thence ariſe all our diſputes & factions.

'Tis an *error* to thinke there can be a great *Body* of men inconſiſtent with Government, ſince to be lawleſſe is as oppoſite to the nature of mankind in general, as death it ſelf. Every ſober man therefore (let his Religion be what it will) find's out ſome diſtinction or other to prevent confuſion & to conform to lawes that tend to Government. The *Preſbyterians* are too diſcreet & rich to be *anarchical*, & whoſoever has, & loves riches, will be alwayes fond of laws that preſerve his right to them.

The *Phanatiques* are generally harmleſſe & well meaning, & though a *Quaker* will not ſet out his Tithes, he will bid the *Miniſter* or *Tithing man* take them; nay if he find loſſe by their carving, he will at length do it himſelf with this or the like ſalvo, that *'Tis the old man & not the new that payes the Hireling that Judaical abomination*: nor do theſe poor people refuſe (it ſeems) to engage to live peaceably, as their friend *Mr. Penn* tells us in his *Great Caſe*. Now for the *Papiſts*, the greateſt & moſt abſolute Princes of the World are not only of their profeſſion, but our own Kingdom alſo was extremely conſiderable under their *Government*, & our excellent Lawes & prudent old cuſtomes were of their framing; as they well know, & alſo vaunt in their late *Apology* and *Reply*.

Beſides though the *Papiſts* of *England* are ſtill ſo great Aſſertors of the *Popes* power in *Spirituals*, that I really believe (by what I have read & ſeen) that there would more dye for him here, than in any two Countreyes in the world, yet we know that in the very depth of *Popery* no body ſtruck more bold & home at all temporal encroachments of the *Romiſh See*, than the *Engliſh*; (for they not only made ſtrict prohibitions againſt the *comming* in of *Legates* without leave, againſt *publication of Bulls*, & the like; but alſo enacted thoſe nipping lawes of *Mortmain*, ſo that no body could voluntarily, & of his own head give one foot of land to the *Church*; Nor at this day do I find, (for truly I have made particular enquiry about it) any Frenchman more willing than our preſent *Papiſts* to tye up the *Popes* hands from medling with the *civil Government* of the Kingdom.

If therefore all or any of theſe *Diſſenters* be now heaving at the *Government*, 'tis becauſe they are diſtinguiſh'd from the reſt of the *Nation*, & made as uncapable of many things as ſtrangers & aliens; nor do's animoſity or a rebellious Spirit always proceed from the Religion men profeſſe but from the frailty of nature, which makes them often partial, & take the dictates of their appetite for truth & reaſon. Now were no *Engliſh Chriſtian* (as long as obedient to the lawful *Power*) inconvenienc'd for his *Con-*

*science*, 'tis impossible but *Sectaries* would be as heartily sollicitous for the good of the *Nation*, as any men else whatsoever.

This most evidently appeares by the *Welsh*, who (whilst we suspected & used them with rigour) were ever unquiet, & our most deadly enemies: but after we had received them as friends, & made them partakers of all the *priviledges* of the Kingdome, they not only forgot *our strange usage of their Princes, the losse of their lands, & the Egyptian slavery* they were under, but so united themselves with us, that our losses are now theirs, & theirs ours; nor have they since ever stirr'd or made ill use of our favours, but (on the contrary) by them, both they and we are become *one people*, & *one nation* without the least rancor, or grudge; nay so fond have they been of our *Monarchy* (which once they hated above all things) that four parts of five of them were faithfull to his *late Majesty*, whilst such a number of *English* were up against him. If then *gentlenesse* & *interest* could reconcile long feudes, & make men from mortal foes become the greatest friends, why may not we expect by the like method the like successe in these our present distractions?

There's one *argument* (as 'tis thought) of great weight against this *liberty of Conscience*, viz: *That all Dissenters when they were in power would tolerate noe Religion but their own* (as the *Papists* in times past, & the *Protestant Sectaries* in the late Rebellion) & therefore in *Justice* they ought now to be served in the same manner. The matter of *fact* is granted & taken out of their sermons I knowe, yet nevertheless if persecuting *Christians* for *Conscience*, be in it selfe against *Charity*, we must not retaliate, & render like for like. But on the other side, if the *lawful Magistrate* may punish *tender Consciences* when he thinks it for the honour of *God*, & the quiet of the Government, this may perchance a little touch the *Presbyterians* & *Phanatiques* (who were our Rulers by indirect meanes) but then we can never blame any longer the *Papists* for what they did, because their Government (as to its Juridiction) was as lawful as ours, & their *plea* consequently unanswerable, *viz.* That they really *fancy'd their Religion true, & the Protestant heritical; That they thought it would for ever distract & disquiet the nation to permit new Doctrines*; & in short, *That they proceeded according to Magna Charta, & other Lawes enacted by the legal Authority of the Kingdome.*

Noe man can therefore better defend the *Marian dayes* & all *Popish severity*, than by advising the punishment of *Non conformists*, & practising it as we do; But if we would have the *Church of England's* great beauty appear, & be the *true spouse without spot or wrinkle* we must necessarily refrain from doing those things, which they whom we blame are deem'd guilty of.

It is pleasant to see now adays how *Presbyterians*, *Independents* & *Papists*, (though really no great friends) begin to claw one another; & who

can blame them for it, or would not think them otherwiſe fools, ſince they lye all under the ſame lash.

I remember when *Doctor Hewet* was to be executed, our *Church of England & City Divines* joyn'd together (though they hated one aonther ſufficiently) to petition *Cromwel* for him; at which ſome perſons of quality wondring one night at *Dr. Duns, Sir Henry Blunt* anſwered, that he thought there was nothing extraordinary in that action; for (ſaid he) I have neare my houſe a *Common* where my piggs & my neighbour's feed, & theere I dayly ſee that they eagerly fight & bite one another at the trough. But if a dog happens to fall upon any one, the reſt will preſently take the part of the oppreſs'd with all the zeale & fury imaginable.

'Tis certain both *Greek* & *Trojan* will unite when they finde it their intereſt to do it, & what greater intereſt can any man have, than the *good* of his *Country*, if he be capable of participating of all the aduantages that accrue?

I do not therefore inferr that preſently a *Quaker* muſt be made *Maſter of the Ceremonies*, or *Revelles*, but that if he can dance, & put of his hat with as good a grace as another, he should not looſe the hopes of theſe places by reaſon of his Religion; for though thouſands will never emerge but be Beggars and Tinkers, should all our *Colliass* be fraught with Gold, yet theſe very contemptible men would think the *Government* uneaſie, and perchance wish it's ruine, were they by *Act* of *Parliament* never to riſe to any higher pitch.

Were we all of one *Opinion*, no man should be more willing to keep out *Sects* than my ſelf, for then 'twould be both feaſeable and lawful; but ſince things are come to this height, 'tis now impoſſible to do it by *Severity*; for all violenr courſes will only exaſperate more than half our ſubjects, & cauſe many to catch at all ſeditious oppertunities that ſhall at any time accurre.

But ſome men (like *Juſtice Overdo*) muſt be punishing, for othewiſe they fancy all *Diſcipline* loſt; & therefore of ſuch I would faine know, ſince all *Diſſenters* cannot in *Prudence* be brought to the ring, which of them would they baite had they power?

To fall foule on the *Presbyterians* would be madneſſe, for who would not deem that action ſo, wch muſt needs provoak a *rich*, a *prudent*, & a *numerous Party* to be eternal' enemies to the Government, & yet no *Proteſtant* can call their *errours* in Faith damnable. They once err'd we know, but this may be a means to make their children alſo faulty; & truly I doubt not but the miſeries they at laſt ſuffer'd in the *late Rebellion*, (for wealthy men muſt ſmart in ſuch diſorders) will cauſe them to be for the future *faithfull Engliſh men*, unleſſe new *exaſperations* pervert both their *reſolution* & *reaſon*.

Twere pitty alſo, methinks, to be alvvayes punishing *Phanatiques*, vvho, rather vvant good *Phiſitian*, & *Cephaliques*, than the *auſterity* of a *Conſtable*

I am ſure (as I ſaid before) it makes them more obſtinate, as fancying themſelves like the *primitive Chriſtians*, whilſt the *Hollanders* grow rich by our loſſes, affording them that quiet which they find not at home, & thereby become maſters of thoſe *manufactures* which formerly we *alone* could brag of.

Or ſhall we then vent our fury againſt *Papiſts*, & make our ſelves ſtill ridiculous to our *neighbouring Princes*, who receiving odd accounts from their Agents, think us a weak people and eaſie to be diſtracted by vain fears & jealouſies? Nor can it certainly be for the good or honour of the Nation to perſecute thoſe, who have ſhewed ſo much *loyalty*, that no race of men could ever parallel them unleſs the true *Members* of the *Church of England*; & that which makes me yet more their friend, is that at preſent (though we have often provokt them) they keep no *private cabalting* with either *France*, *Spain*, *Pope*, *Devil*, or any thing that is ill (for had they done it we ſhould have ſmelt it out long ago) but on the contrary, they have ever the *King* in their mouths, as if the *Rump* were now on foot, & expreſſe as much grief at our *publique misfortunes*, as any other *Subjects* in the *Nation*.

I defie all their *Prieſts* & *Fryers* to alter my principles in Religion, yet I do acknowledge their *Church* to be a *Church* as our learned *Prelates* & *Divines* have taught me; nor can I but decrie thoſe that will damn our great *Grand-fathers*, and conſequently all before them; for I am ſure every body then were *Papiſts* with a vengeance, unleſſe ſometimes two or three fooliſh *Lollards* ſtarted up, who were far liker the *Diſciples of Fox* & *Naylor*, than *Members* of the *true Proteſtant Religion*.

Away then with perſecuting *Chriſtians* purely for *Conſcience*, which is the only *harveſt* for *Knaves*, & of this here at home we have two moſt woefull examples; For neither had the *Heads* of our *long Rebellion* been ſo powerfully aſſiſted at firſt, could their *zealous Abettors* have been aſſured of their Religion; Nor was it ever poſſible for *Cromwel* to have rais'd himſelf to that pitch he was in, but by laying hold on the *tender Conſciences* of men, who deſpairing of favour from a lawfuller *Government*, became at laſt *bawds* to his *ambition*, & then ſhar'd with him in that rich & plentiful booty.

Away I ſay, with this *perſecution*, the chief cauſe alſo of ſo much *Atheiſme* amongſt us; for men who want courage to ſuffer, by ſinning often againſt their *Conſciences*, become hardned in time, & inſtead of ever really approving the Religion impos'd, think every thing at laſt a meer cheat, & ſo from harmleſſe people (erronious it may be at firſt in points of ſmall concernment) grow fixt by degrees in all *infidelity* & *prophaneneſſe*; nor has any one thing been more deſtructive to our Government than ſo many *Oathes*, for moſt that were truly ill men never ſcrupled the taking of them, whenas *Diſſenters* that ſtood on *Principles* have always refus'd them, & often

times smartly suffer'd for it. Thus the *best* fall only within reach of the *lawes*, whilst the most *factious* & *dangerous* (against whom these very *lawes* were intended) escape their deserved punishment.

I professe to the whole world I have no inclination to the *Religion* of our *Sectaries*, but their *persons*; who being so numerous can never be misus'd without an unspeakable inconvenience to us all; & though I have been a *Cavalier* (I thank *God*) ever since the name came up (& to this day dote upon any thing that truly was of that *party*) yet I have laid aside all animosity against our old enemies, because I am sure it is for the interest now of that *Prince* whose *Rights* we all heretofore so eagerly asserted.

As Rebels against the *State* must be pardon'd whensoever they are many, even so we must do with *Dissenters* in Religion, for though the executing of three or four Traytors may be *Justice*, yet to hang up many millions, would be termed *cruelty* let the fact be what it will.

Let there then be a *general Toleration*, for unlesse it be generall we shall never be at rest, but furnish *knaves* still (as I said before) with advantages to cousin poor people, & provoke them (being once deluded) to kick against their *lawfull Magistrate*.

Let *Presbyterians* whine their fill, & tell us of *Soulsaving-ending-home-comforts*; let *Phanatiques* sigh till they be in earnest; & let *Papists* tire themselves with their *Pater Nosters* & *Ave Maries*, & then I am sure they will all of them soon find the honour & welfare of their *Country* to be their only *interest*. Nor is there danger that the bare hopes of recovering the *publick Lands* they once bought in the late *civil War*, will make the *Body* of *Phanatiques* fond of alterations; since they very well know, let what changes soever happen (which God in his mercy defend us alwaies from) the *new Adventurers* will get the prey to themselves, for that must be proportioned to each Actor, according to what he *then* do's, & not to what he or his father *formerly* did: but though by rebellion they can have no assurance of reenjoying their old silly purchasses, or any temporal gain more than other new partizans, yet all of them are sure that *Liberty of Conscience* will be granted them from the first, what faction soever takes up armes against the King which must needs make even quiet *Sectaries* greedy to hear of insurrections & broils. How necessary are the means of preventing such an ill? for *we* be to that country to so great a part of whose Inhabitants, *sedition* & *disorders* are a certain advantage.

'Twere needlesse to mention the many places where *Toleration* even at present is granted, as well in *Popish* as *Protestant* Countries, which shows all discourses against its unpracticablenesse chimerical, & the idle whimsies of mens brains; nay we know that in *Holland*, & in many provinces of *Germany* (besides several *plantations*, in the *East* & *West Indies*, & a thousand

other places) *Dissenters* are not only good *Subjects* & make the *publick interest* of the *Country* their *own*, but also after their playing the fool a while, they become tyr'd at last by being let alone, & then commonly conform themselves to the Religion of the Government under which they happen then to be.

Nor is this all, for *Toleration* will convert several *Sects* from those abominable *opinions* as to *Obedience* which now they are thought tainted with; because whilst they secretly meet in by places what may not their Pastours infuse into them, & what will they not easily swallow, being discontented and troubled? On the other side, if their *churches* be *publique* & allowed by *Authority*, we may all then not only truly know what is taught by them, but also their *Congregations* (being enjoyned to give up in writing the *summe* of their *tenets*) will without *peradventure* soon conform to the due *obedience* mentioned; for 'tis certain to all mankind that things positively against the *Law of Nature* as *Murther*, *Theft*, *Adultery*, *Liberty to kill Kings* when we please, & the like) will never be permitted by any Power in the world, & therefore the *Knaves*, or *Ringleaders* of our *Sectaries* (whose ambition and design is to draw people after them) dare not insist upon such *Doctrines*, as knowing it cannot be so much as conniv'd at by his *Majesty*; & instead of being thought martyrs they are sure to be deserted by their own *Followers*, who will soon discover the cheat, when they find the *King* really *Indulgent* & *good natur'd* & shockt at nothing, but at that which is destructive & hurtfull in it self: for as I said before, There's no *Body* of men truly *anarchicall*.

This will cause them then at least to explicate the worst, & most seditious *Doctrines* so, that *Rebellion* must be own'd *unlawfull*, and the *persons* of *Kings* esteemed *Sacred*; by which great numbers will be undeluded, and made faithfull, seeing that publickly condemned by their own *Assembly*, which now at best lyes *undetermined*, & therefore may be asserted by the *Preacher* when he pleases. Moreover this enjoyning each *Congregation* to give in a *Confession* of their *Faith*, will certainly reduce all *Sectaries* to their wits; for thus they will be accustomed to stand to some *Principles* or other, whereas now they have nothing *positive*, & consequently can hardly be confuted, the only aim of their *politicall* & *cunning Teachers*.

If it be then *true Protestant charity* not to damn *Christians* for *Opinions* whilst they agree in the *maine*, If moreover *Sects* are already so fixt, that they cannot be rooted out by force without destroying the Nation, & if Severity blinds them that would otherwise see the truth, and makes them persevere in their errors, entailing also a hatred against the Government on most of their Posterity (which at present weakens & may for the future again undo us) where is the fruit of tormenting men for their *consciences*, unlesse it be to furnish our *Sectaries* (especially *Papists*) with an unanswerable argument for any action committed whilst the power was in their hands.

But if *Liberty* were granted, if guilty men only suffer'd and not their *Parties*, & if *Dissenters* were capable of favour & trust; all people would joyn in the maintenance of the Government. *Delinquents* might be punish'd to the satisfaction of

the reſt & alſo the deſigns of all dangerous Miſcreants would be wholly fruſtrated; & in that only conſiſts the only poſſibility of new troubles. Nor can *Diſſenters* by *Liberty of conſcience* have any pretence in the leaſt to *Biſhopricks*, *Deaneries*, or our other preſent *Eccleſiaſtical preferments*, more than to any mans private lands; becauſe they never contributed to them, & therefore the *King* (had he no other title) muſt diſpoſe of them, being ever *heir* where there is none; & to how many men of parts & learning our famous *Monarchs* have ſtill from time to time ſince the *Reformation* beſtowed them, no *Engliſh man* can I am ſure be ignorant. What *Lectaries* give of their own for the maintenance of their Paſtours, in *Gods* name let them have it; & as for the claim of *Papiſts* to the Premiſſes we need not fear it, though our Anceſtors of that perſwaſion were the Benefactors; for they that got the *Pope* in *Q. Maries* time (for the quiet of the Kingdom) to confirm the *Act of Parliament* that ſold *Abbey lands* (which makes our title to them unqueſtionable upon all accounts whatſoever) will without doubt in conſideration of *Indulgence* do again the like, ſhould any man be ſo ſcrupulous as to deſire their releaſe to that little which is ſtill left the *Church*.

No benefit can there then be to invent new *Sects*, or to continue them, becauſe *Liberty* to do as they pleaſe will quite cool (as I ſaid) the *zeale* of men delighted with novelties, nor ſhall the perſons of many now amongſt us be admired who under pretence of ſuffering for *God*, devour Widdowes & Orphans, & by degrees become the ruine both of *Church* & *State*.

How great & ſtrong therefore muſt the *Church* of *England* grow by this *Indulgence*, when 'tvvil be no advantage for Deceivers (that novv dayly rage) to rob her of her children, & vvhat ſhall hinder the ſheep that vvent aſtray to return, when they find neither pleaſure nor profit in their folly? Nor ſhall we then (to the preſent wonder of mankind) be always *conſulting about Religion*, as our very *Grammar* has it, nor will our *Parliaments* be longer troubled with the inſolencies of *Papiſts* & *Phanatiques*, which has been the common artifice to divert ſober motions, when they ran counter to the private intereſt of a few. Having thus ſtated each Party's *principles* & *caſe* as full as I could (& really believing *Toleration* will ſo ſettle us in our *ſpiritual* & *temporal* concerns, that in a trice neither of them will have any conſiderable enemies left) I now defie our *Diſſenters* themſelves to prevent their own ruine, though I have diſcover'd every thing, & ſhow'd them the very *trap* & *pitfall*. All that their *Leaders* can (I am ſure) do, is (as ſome have already done) to *hinder* under hand that *Indulgence* which they ſeem ſo earneſtly to deſire; for they are ſenſible enough (as I mentioned) that they will hereby not only looſe the preſent benefit they make of their *followers* (who in peace will ſoon be weary of them) but alſo that all their rebellious deſigns muſt be fruſtrated, as being never able to perſwade them to fight the *Battailes* of the *Lord*, or in plain Engliſh to *rebell*, that already enjoy what they hope for by the danger: & beſides all theſe true reaſons, Pity it ſelf caſts ſomething into the *Ballance*, for if *the righteous man be merciſull to his beaſt*, much more ought we ſo to be to poor well-meaning *Chriſtians*.

FINIS LONDON 1672.